CLAIMS

1. A method for developing, releasing and distributing training courses via the Internet, the method providing a client, who authors the training courses, release control and secure confidentiality of all contents of the training courses prior to authorized course release by the client and which provides selective control whereby the training courses can only be made available over the Internet by a predetermined training course service provider, the method comprising the steps of:

a) providing at least one computer having a browser and an Internet communicating link for use by the authoring client;

b) providing a server which comprises an Internet communicating link for the purpose of communicating with the at least one computer for receiving training course development material and assembling the training material into training courses and which further comprises applets, plug-ins and other software programs for reconfiguring the browser as a training course authoring tool;

c) establishing an application service provider connection between the at least one computer and the server;

d) communicating, as downloading software available from the server, applets, plug-ins and other program software by which the browser is reconfigured to provide a training course authoring tool within the at least one computer for use by the authoring client;

e) as a part of the authoring tool, providing an encrypting key defining program and an encrypting program which encodes all training course material composed by the

authoring client to provide a securely encrypted file of all such course material sent to the server to be stored therein;

f) accessing the server via the at least one computer for the purpose of reconfiguring the browser as a training course authoring tool and receiving the encrypting key program;

g) defining a secure encrypting/decrypting key set for selected use with the at least one computer;

h) using the authoring tool to compose training course development material which is at least a portion of a predetermined training course as an Internet transmittable file;

i) encrypting the file;

j) transmitting the file to the server for assembly and storage as an organized, encrypted training course file which can only be used after decryption thus assuring that any such file can only be accessed from the server for use solely by the authoring client.

2. The method according to Claim 1 further comprising the step of assembling within the server the encrypted transmitted training course file with any other encrypted so transmitted training course files of the predetermined training course to provide an authoring client retrievable file which can only be used in any manner after decryption using the encrypting/decrypting key set, disposed within the at least one computer, thus assuring that the assembled file can only be used as training course material via the server by only the authoring client.

3. The method according to Claim 1 further comprising a step of using SSL public/private key encrypted transmission for communications between the authoring client and server.

4. The method according to Claim 1 comprising an additional step of defining a server based public key file whereby public keys of multiple authors are made available to other authors who are authorized access to training course development files.

5. The method according to Claim 1 comprising an additional step of defining a server based tool shed whereby common tools used in a training course is made to multiple authors.

6. The method according to Claim 5 comprising an additional step of defining a server base tool control file.

7. The method according to Claim 1 comprising an additional step of defining a segment control file whereby multiple authors may cooperate in production of a single training course.

8. The method according to Claim 2 comprising the steps of requesting the assembled training course from the server, then receiving and decrypting the training course within a computer having the secure encrypting/decrypting key set, for testing and editing purposes.

9. The method according to Claim 8 wherein the requesting step comprises defining parameters associated with a desired data transmission rate and characteristics to simulate expected predetermined variations in Internet transmission and reception.

10. The method according to Claim 9 comprising a further step of simulating the desired data and transmission and characteristics by the server while sending the assembled training course to the computer through which the requesting step is made.

11. The method according to Claim 1 comprising a step of doubly decrypting received data to decode files encrypted by both the encrypting key defining program and as an SSL public/private encrypted transmission.

12. The method according to Claim 1 comprising a step of transmitting the secure encrypting/decrypting key set to the server, thereby permitting decryption at the server site of the training course file as currently assembled thereat for publishing and distributing a released Internet training course by the server.

13. The method according to Claim 1 comprising a step of adding certification testing material to the predetermined training course by the authoring client.

14. The method according to Claim 13 further comprising a step of providing, from the server, applets, plug-ins and other programs to at least one computer at a student client site to provide an authoring tool thereat.

15. The method according to Claim 14 comprising steps of editing and adapting the certification testing material to meet particular certification requirements at the student client site.

16. The method according to Claim 15 comprising step of providing, as a part of the authoring tool, an encrypting key defining program and an encrypting program which encodes all certification testing material composed by an author at the student client site to provide a securely encrypted file of all such certification testing material sent to the server.

17. The method according to Claim 16 comprising step of defining a secure student client encrypting/decrypting key set for selected use with the at least one computer at the student client site.

18. The method according to Claim 17 comprising step of encrypting the certification testing material using the student client encrypting/decrypting key set.

19. The method according to Claim 18 comprising step of composing and transmitting the file to the server for assembly and storage as an organized, encrypted certification course testing file which can only be used after decryption using the secure encrypting/decrypting key set thus assuring that any such file can only be accessed from the server for use solely by the authoring student client.

20. The method according to Claim 19 further comprising the step of assembling within the server the encrypted transmitted certification testing course file with any other so encrypted certification testing course files of the predetermined training course to provide an student client retrievable file which can only be used in any manner after decryption using the secure encrypting/decrypting key set, disposed within the at least one computer, thus assuring that the assembled file can only be used as training course material via the server by only the student client.

21. The method according to Claim 19 further comprising a step of using SSL public/private key encrypted transmission for communications between the authoring client and server.

22. The method according to Claim 21 comprising a step of doubly decrypting received data to decode files encrypted by both the encrypting key defining program and as an SSL public/private encrypted transmission.

23. The method according to Claim 21 comprising a step of transmitting the student client secure encrypting/decrypting key set to the server, thereby permitting decryption at the server site of the certification testing course file as currently assembled thereat for selectively publishing and distributing a released certifying Internet testing course by the server.

24. The method according to Claim 1 comprising a further step of accessing and decrypting a training course file for the purpose of editing the training course material at the at least one computer.

25. The method according to Claim 24 comprising repeating steps (c) through (j).

26. The method according to Claim 1 comprising a further step of establishing an application service provider connection between the at least one computer and a portable remote server over a direct line, said remote server comprising applets, plug-ins and other software programs for reconfiguring the browser as a training course authoring tool.

27. The method according to Claim 26 comprising a further step of transmitting applets, plug-ins and other software programs from the remote server to the at least one computer for reconfiguring the browser as a training course authoring tool.

28. The method according to Claim 26 comprising steps of down loading an encrypted training course development material file from the server via the Internet to the portable remote server and files for reconfiguring the browser as a training course authoring tool the authoring client using the portable remote server.

29. The method according to Claim 28 comprising performing steps (e) through (j) wherein the remote portable server is the server for the at least one computer.

30. The method according to Claim 29 comprising a step of transmitting an encrypted training course file over the Internet from the remote portable server to a centrally disposed server to be stored as an encrypted file in the centrally disposed server.

31. The method according to Claim 27 comprising a step of transmitting a new encrypted file to the remote server for assembly and storage through the browser which can only be used after decryption using the secure encrypting/decrypting key set, thus assuring that any such file can only be accessed from the remote server for use solely by the authoring client.

32. The method according to Claim 30 further comprising the step of assembling within the remote server the encrypted transmitted training course file with any other encrypted so transmitted training course files of the predetermined training course to provide an authoring client retrievable file which can only be used in any manner after decryption using the encrypting key, disposed within the at least one computer, thus assuring that the assembled file can only be used as training course material via the remote server by only the authoring client.

33. The method according to Claim 27 further comprising a step of using SSL public/private key encrypted transmission for all communications between the authoring client and remote server.

34. The method according to Claim 27 comprising the steps of requesting and receiving from the remote server and, then, decrypting within a computer having the encrypting key, for testing and editing purposes, a contemporarily assembled portion of a training course.

35. The method according to Claim 27 comprising a step of doubly decrypting received data to decode files encrypted by both the secure encrypting/decrypting key set defining program and as an SSL public/private encrypted transmission.

36. Apparatus for developing, releasing and distributing training courses via the Internet, whereby a client, who authors the courses, is assured release control and secure confidentiality of all contents of the courses prior to authorized course release by the client and whereby a service provider who distributes the training courses is assured selective control whereby the training courses can only be made available over the Internet by the service provider, said apparatus comprising:

a) at least one computer having a browser and an Internet link for use by the authoring client;

b) a server which comprises a centrally disposed link for communicating through the Internet link with the at least one computer for the purpose of receiving training course development material from the at least one computer;

c) an application service provider connection between the at least one computer and the server;

d) a server software package comprising applets, plug-ins and other programs for reconfiguring the browser to provide a training course authoring tool on the at least one computer for use by the authoring client;

e) said server software package further comprising software for defining a secure encrypting/decrypting key set and an associated encrypting program which encodes training course material composed by the authoring client to provide a secure encrypted file of all such course material sent to the server; and

f) training course material file storage disposed within said server for storing encrypted files of training course material received from the at least one computer, the encrypted files only being able to be decrypted by the at least one computer while the browser is reconfigured as a training course authoring tool and the encrypting key resides in the at least one computer.

37. Apparatus for developing, releasing and distributing training courses via the Internet according to Claim 36 wherein said server comprises an assembler for assembling a plurality of encrypted training course material files into a single encrypted training course file.

38. Apparatus for developing, releasing and distributing training courses via the Internet according to Claim 36 wherein said connection comprises an Internet connection.

39. Apparatus for developing, releasing and distributing training courses via the Internet according to Claim 38 wherein said server is a remote server and said connection is a direct connection to said at least one computer.

40. Apparatus for developing, releasing and distributing training courses via the Internet according to Claim 39 wherein said remote server comprises an Internet connection to a centrally disposed server.

41. Apparatus for developing, releasing and distributing training courses via the Internet according to Claim 36 wherein said at least one computer is at least two computers.

42. Apparatus for developing, releasing and distributing training courses via the Internet according to Claim 41 wherein said software for defining an encrypting key provides a tool shed and access to files addressed via the tool shed.

43. Apparatus for developing, releasing and distributing training courses via the Internet according to Claim 36 wherein said server software package further comprises software for defining authoring keys for the tool shed whereby a part of the training course material created by a predetermined author is selectively only edited by an author having the authoring key.

44. Apparatus for developing, releasing and distributing training courses via the Internet according to Claim 36 wherein said software package comprises a tool shed access program whereby a set of authoring keys are stored within the server to permit authorized access to tool shed and other program development material.

45. Apparatus for developing, releasing and distributing training courses via the Internet according to Claim 36 wherein said software package comprises an encrypting key transfer program whereby the secure encrypting/decrypting key set is transmitted to the server to decrypt the training course file for release and selective distribution over the Internet to student clients.

46. Apparatus for developing, releasing and distributing training courses via the Internet according to Claim 36 further comprising at least one computer having a browser and a communicating link for use by a student client in making a certification testing file associated with the training course.

47. Apparatus for developing, releasing and distributing training courses via the Internet according to Claim 36
wherein said connection comprises an Internet connection.

48. Apparatus for developing, releasing and distributing training courses via the Internet according to Claim 36 wherein said server is a remote server and said connection is a direct connection to said at least one computer.

49. Apparatus for developing, releasing and distributing training courses via the Internet according to Claim 48 wherein said remote server comprises an Internet connection to a centrally disposed server.